

Finding Aid to the Fargo Urban Renewal Photograph Collection

Fargo Urban Renewal Photograph Collection, 1950s-1960s

116 slides

37 photographic prints

9 negatives

Collection number: Photograph 2068

Negatives: (4x5P 961-969)

[History](#)

[Scope and Content](#)

[Box and Folder List](#)

OVERVIEW

Links: Finding aid to [Fargo Main Avenue Urban Renewal Photograph Collection](#) (Photo 2011)

View collection in [Digital Horizons](#)

Access: The collection is open under the rules and regulations of the Institute.

Provenance: Donated by Earl Stewart, 2000 (Acc. 2744).

Property rights: The Institute for Regional Studies owns the property rights to this collection.

Copyrights: Copyrights to this collection is not held by the Institute.

Citation: Institute for Regional Studies, NDSU, Fargo (item number)

HISTORY

Since Fargo, N.D. was incorporated in 1875 the downtown area was the main commercial center for the city. But the portion from Fourth Street to the Red River had become a dead area for commercial development and stagnated. Deteriorated buildings, vacant lots becoming refuse

dumps and general blight became a permanent part of the area. The Fargo City Commission in 1945 employed I. S. Shattuck as a city planning consultant. In 1952 he presented a master plan for the city which recommended a cluster of civic buildings in the Fourth Street area. The plan was approved and became part of the city ordinances. In 1954 Harold Bangert visited the Chicago regional office of the United States Housing and Home Finance Agency (HHFA) where he obtained information on the federal urban renewal program which had been broadened by the Housing Act of 1954 to include cities the size of Fargo. Civic leaders and city officials had for some time realized the necessity of improving three blighted areas in Fargo - Fourth Street, Main Avenue, and the Golden Ridge area.

Because of encouragement by federal officials, Fargo city officials secured passage, enabling the legislature to allow a city to accept federal aid. The Fargo Urban Renewal Agency was established with Earl Stewart as executive director, and a survey was done with a federal grant on the Fourth Street Project. In December of 1956 due to results of the survey, the Fargo Workable Program Report, was approved by the City Commission and in February of 1957 by the Chicago HHFA office. The final project applications were submitted and the property in the area was appraised with the first purchase of land for the future Civic Center made by the City of Fargo in April of 1957 and continuing into 1958.

In February of 1958 the project had been approved with a federal grant of \$1,026,209.00 and a loan, of \$1,750,354.00. In July 1958 the Urban Renewal Agency purchased the Civic Center site from the City of Fargo and also began to purchase other tracts of land in the project area. Through 1958 and 1959 all land was obtained and buildings razed. In 1960 parcels of the land were sold to businesses and in March 1961 the Fargo Library Board purchased a tract for a new public library.

After much delay, authorization was given in October, 1964 by the HHFA to include the construction of a Second Street underpass in the project. Work began on the underpass in January 1965 and was completed in November 1965 thus drawing the R-1 project to an end. The R-1 project, the first urban renewal project in North Dakota, became a model for the other communities throughout the United States. With the completion of the R-1 project full direction was directed at the R-2 Main Avenue Project upon which planning had begun in 1960.

The Main Avenue urban renewal application was resubmitted in 1961, receiving approval. The project was expanded to include the area east of Broadway to the Red River and from the Northern Pacific Main Line tracks to the equivalent of Second Street South. The Amended Revised Urban Renewal Plan "Main Avenue Project N.D. R-2" was approved by the Urban Renewal Agency in 1972. The Agency closed out with one parcel remaining and was succeeded by the Housing and Redevelopment Authority of Fargo in 1974.

SCOPE AND CONTENT

The **Fargo Urban Renewal Photograph Collection** includes photographs and slides documenting the two Fargo urban renewal projects, Main Avenue Urban Renewal, and the Fourth Street Urban Renewal, as kept by Earl Stewart who headed the Fargo Urban Renewal Agency. The two other Fargo urban renewal photograph collections were accessioned with the corresponding records. This collection includes photographs of housing of the time, major buildings, demolition and businesses in the areas affected. The collection has been organized into three series: Main Avenue Urban Renewal, Fourth Street Urban Renewal, and Slides.

The **Main Avenue Series** consists of six (6) photographs showing various businesses on Main

Avenue. Among these photographs there are a few specifically on the back alley of some businesses which very much characterize the reasons why they did the urban renewal project, due to the poor condition of many of the buildings. This series also includes seven (7) pictures of the original Gellers Auto parts business as well which include used cars, fixed up cars, and scrap cars, and used parts as well.

The **Fourth Street Series** includes thirty-one (31) photographs of housing on Fourth Street. Mainly all of the houses in this collection are street view, showing the condition of the housing on Fourth Street, some of which were in poor shape.

The **Slides Series** consisting of one hundred sixteen (116) slides, making up the bulk of the collection. It is divided into two portions, namely Fourth Street and Main Ave, each with similar types of images: before demolition, the demolition process, aerials, models etc. Some of the key views in this collection: The Fort Hotel, Pontoppidan Lutheran Church, new Fargo Civic Center, and the new Fargo Chamber of Commerce building on Fourth Street.

BOX AND FOLDER LIST

Folder	Content
1	Finding aid
	Main Avenue Series
2	Businesses (6)
3	Geller's Automotive (7)
	Fourth Street Series
4	Generic housing (31)
	Slide Series
	Fourth Street Urban Renewal—
5.1-5	Aerials
5.6-19	Before demolition
5.20-26	Demolition
5.27-28	Pontoppidan Lutheran Church
5.29-33	Buildings
5.34-40	Models
5.41-57	Civic Center
	Main Avenue Urban Renewal—
5.58-59	Aerials
5.60-98	Before demolition
5.99-113	Demolition
5.114-116	Models